

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 3**

### ***ADEQ COMMENT: Section 5.4, Groundwater Quality***

*In the course of monitoring, Excelsior detected petroleum odors in these and other coreholes, and free product in CS-10 and CS-14. Samples were collected as part of a study of Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (LNAPLs) in groundwater by Haley & Aldrich (2015).*

- a. Please provide additional information regarding the lateral and vertical extent of the petroleum plume in the groundwater per A.A.C. R18-9-A202(A)(8)(b)(vi and vii).*
- b. Please provide additional information regarding your plan in addressing and determining the source of the petroleum contamination in the groundwater per A.A.C. R18-9-A202(A)(8)(b)(vi and vii).*
- c. Please provide additional information regarding the impact of mixing and injecting petroleum contaminated water to the aquifer per A.A.C. R18-9-A202(A)(8)(b)(vi and vii).*

### **RESPONSE:**

- a. Excelsior does not have additional information regarding the lateral and vertical extent of the petroleum “plume”. However, based on the chemical data presented in Table 5-5 of the APP Application and the Haley & Aldrich report (Appendix E of the APP application), a conceptual model is proposed in which there are two distinct sources of petroleum:
  1. Drilling fluids, including diesel or some other petroleum product in CS-10 and CS-14. LNAPL, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are present in these coreholes.
  2. Gasoline compounds (primarily benzene, toluene, and 1,2 dichloroethane—a lead scavenger) from leaking underground storage tanks at “The Thing” (ADEQ LUST ID 4387). ADEQ closed the site in May 2005.

Regarding source #1, at CS-10 and CS-14, the most likely source of LNAPL and the hydrocarbon compounds detected in these coreholes is from the drilling fluids used to drill the borings. The following lines of evidence support this conclusion:

- Both of these coreholes were drilled in 1971. According to Ron Peterson (personal communication), a mud engineer at Halliburton, it was common practice at that time to add diesel or any inexpensive, available petroleum product to drilling mud to lubricate the drill rods and, if necessary, get them unstuck. As noted by Haley & Aldrich, the

compounds detected in CS-10 and CS-14 are consistent with a mixture of petroleum products, including gasoline. Drilling mud technology has advanced significantly since that time, and the advanced polymers used now are more effective and environmentally friendly.

- LNAPL was not observed in any of the NSH wells drilled in 2014-2015, the nearest of which are 150 and 300 feet away (SHH-10, NSH-13, and NSH-14B).
- In February 2015, after LNAPL was discovered in CS-10 and CS-14, Haley and Aldrich returned to the site on a weekly basis to measure and bail LNAPL. They were able to remove all of the LNAPL from CS-14 and remove all but a very thin layer at CS-10. If a thick layer of LNAPL of significant lateral extent were present, LNAPL would continue to enter the hole and bailing would not have reduced the thickness.
- The extent of petroleum in CS-10 and CS-14 appears to be limited to the immediate area of the boreholes. The wells nearest to these borings (NSH-13 and NSH-9, respectively) do not contain LNAPL.
- There are no known prior site uses that would result in the LNAPL occurrence observed in these borings.

Regarding source #2, dissolved petroleum compounds have been detected in NSH-15, NSH-16, and NSH-17 in the southwest corner of the wellfield just downgradient of The Thing USTs. The wells are screened from depths ranging from 585 to 820 below ground surface (NSH-15), 580 to 820 below ground surface (NSH-16), and 940 to 1181 feet below ground surface (NSH-17). VOC concentrations are below AWQSSs.

Toluene was detected in most of the NSH wells sampled in 2015. In most cases, toluene was the only compound detected. Detection of toluene in new monitor wells is common, and it is believed to be from the adhesive on the pipe wrap tape that was used on the pump and wiring (Christy's® Pipe Wrap Tape 10ml has 1.3% by weight toluene in the adhesive). Using toluene concentrations to evaluate the extent of a petroleum plume is not recommended for this reason. It is notable that the three wells that could not be pumped for very long before being dewatered, NSH-25, NSH-14b, and NSH-22, had some of the highest toluene concentrations. This supports the pipe wrap tape as a source—the well could not be adequately flushed. The other wells could be purged of significant volumes before samples were collected, so toluene concentrations were low to non-detect.

In summary, the extent of petroleum compounds in groundwater is limited to the southwest corner of the wellfield as a result of leaking underground storage tanks at The Thing, and in the immediate areas of CS-10 and CS-14, as a result of past drilling practices.

- b. Excelsior does not intend to conduct an investigation of the source of petroleum in groundwater because the source(s) are not ongoing, the contamination is pre-existing, and

the small quantity of organic compounds is considered a *de minimus* condition. In addition, it will be removed in the copper recovery process.

- c. The solvent extraction-electrowinning (SX-EW) process mixes extracted, copper-bearing solutions (PLS) with a petroleum liquid (organic phase) as an essential part of the copper recovery process. Any petroleum compounds recovered from the wellfield in PLS, will be routed to the PLS pond and then to an extraction-stage mixer-settler. In the mixers, the PLS is thoroughly mixed with an active organic extractant in an organic liquid (similar to kerosene), forming a copper-organic complex. Petroleum compounds in the PLS will strongly partition into the organic phase and be separated from the aqueous phase in the settler. Each of six settlers has at least 1,800 square feet of area in which the organic phase is exposed to the atmosphere for volatilization of entrained BTEX compounds. The barren aqueous phase (raffinate) is routed to the raffinate pond for retention and further separation of the organic and aqueous phases. An oil skimmer in the raffinate pond will remove residual organics. The raffinate is pumped from the bottom of the raffinate pond, re-acidified, and recirculated in the wellfield. Although not intended for this purpose, the SX-EW process will be an effective way of removing any petroleum compounds from solution before it is re-injected into the aquifer. However, as discussed in part a of this answer, the extent of petroleum compounds in the wellfield is limited, and based on the characterization completed to date, Excelsior does not anticipate encountering LNAPL or significant concentrations of dissolved petroleum in the wellfield.

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 25**

**ADEQ COMMENT:** *A.A.C. R18 -9-A202(A)(4) and (5)(a) – Section 5.4 indicates that groundwater beneath the project facility is impacted by volatile organic compounds and other petroleum hydrocarbons, and Section 6.2.7 indicates that the total concentration of organic compounds in the process solutions is expected to be approximately 30 to 50 mg/L total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) Please provide an evaluation of hydrocarbon impacts on the following:*

- a. Impoundment HDPE-liners at the Johnson Camp Mine (JCM) during Stage 1, and proposed Gunnison project Stages 2 and 3.*

### **RESPONSE:**

Concentrations of TPH in the ponds on the order of 30 to 50 mg/L are anticipated from the organic liquid (diluent) used in solvent extraction. These concentrations of TPH have proven to be compatible with HDPE lining systems in SX -EW operations in Arizona for the past four decades. The attached chemical resistance chart from GSE Environmental indicates that HDPE liners have satisfactory resistance to petroleum at the temperatures expected at the site. At very high temperatures (140 °F) the liner may reflect some attack, depending on the concentration. Any issues regarding the existing liners at Johnson Camp ponds can be addressed in the Johnson Camp APP Amendment 2.

- b. Equipment failure and maintenance problems for all mechanical equipment that will be associated with the permitted discharging facilities (well field and process/storage impoundments).*

### **RESPONSE:**

TPH concentrations in process solutions will have no impact on equipment failure and maintenance for mechanical equipment associated with the permitted discharging facilities. This equipment is designed to handle the acidic solutions with up to 100 mg/L TPH. Any additional contribution from leaking underground storage tank site (~6.8 µg/L) is considered insignificant compared to the TPH concentrations in the process solutions.

- c. Chemical changes due to interactions between hydrocarbons known to be present at the site and process solutions (pregnant leach solution (PLS), raffinate, make-up water, and etc.).*

### **RESPONSE:**

The SX -EW process entrains and uses organic compounds as a normal part of the copper recovery. Should petroleum compounds be recovered from the wellfield in PLS, they will be

routed to the PLS pond and then to an extraction stage mixer-settler. In the mixer, the PLS is mixed with an active organic extractant in an organic diluent (usually kerosene), forming a copper-organic complex. The barren aqueous phase (raffinate) is routed to the raffinate pond. An oil skimmer in the raffinate pond removes residual organics. The raffinate is pumped from the bottom of the raff pond, re-acidified, and recirculated in the wellfield. The organic solution goes to the electrowinning process for copper recovery. If petroleum compounds are recovered from the wellfield, they will be recovered in the aqueous/organic separation phase. Although not intended for this purpose, the SX-EW process will be an effective way of removing petroleum compounds (if any) from water before it is re-injected into the aquifer.

The average total concentration of petroleum-related VOC compounds in the three wells apparently impacted by the underground storage tank releases associated with “The Thing” is 6.8 µg/L. Using the average screened interval of 237 feet and a prospective impact area of approximately 750 feet by 550 feet and a porosity of 3% (22 million gallons), the total VOC content is approximately 570 grams, 6.5 liters, or 1.7 gallons. Such a quantity of petroleum VOCs will have negligible impact on a solvent extraction system.

- d. *Compatibility with materials and structures associated with the well field operations (well/wellhead construction, pipelines, etc.).*

#### **RESPONSE:**

The materials and structures associated with wellfield operations are designed to be compatible with hydrocarbon concentrations of 30 to 50 milligrams per liter. Low concentrations of additional petroleum hydrocarbons existing within the wellfield (resulting from the leaking underground storage tank site) are approximately four orders of magnitude lower in concentration and will have negligible impact on wellfield materials and structures.

# Chemical Resistance Chart

GSE is the world's leading supplier of high quality, polyethylene geomembranes and geonets. GSE polyethylene geomembranes and geonets are resistant to a great number and combinations of chemicals. Note that the effect of chemicals on any material is influenced by a number of variable factors such as temperature, concentration, exposed area and duration. Many tests have been performed that use geomembranes and geonets and certain specific chemical mixtures. Naturally, however, every mixture of chemicals cannot be tested for, and various criteria may be used to judge performance. Reported performance ratings may not apply to all applications of a given material in the same chemical. Therefore, these ratings are offered as a guide only.

| Medium                      | Concentration | Resistance at:   |                   | Medium                    | Concentration | Resistance at:   |                   |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                             |               | 20° C<br>(68° F) | 60° C<br>(140° F) |                           |               | 20° C<br>(68° F) | 60° C<br>(140° F) |
| A                           |               |                  |                   | Copper chloride           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Acetic acid                 | 100%          | S                | L                 | Copper nitrate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Acetic acid                 | 10%           | S                | S                 | Copper sulfate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Acetic acid anhydride       | 100%          | S                | L                 | Cresylic acid             | sat. sol.     | L                | —                 |
| Acetone                     | 100%          | L                | L                 | Cyclohexanol              | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Adipic acid                 | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Cyclohexanone             | 100%          | S                | L                 |
| Allyl alcohol               | 96%           | S                | S                 | D                         |               |                  |                   |
| Aluminum chloride           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Decahydronaphthalene      | 100%          | S                | L                 |
| Aluminum fluoride           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Dextrine                  | sol.          | S                | S                 |
| Aluminum sulfate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Diethyl ether             | 100%          | L                | —                 |
| Alum                        | sol.          | S                | S                 | Diethylphthalate          | 100%          | S                | L                 |
| Ammonia, aqueous            | dil. sol.     | S                | S                 | Dioxane                   | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Ammonia, gaseous dry        | 100%          | S                | S                 | E                         |               |                  |                   |
| Ammonia, liquid             | 100%          | S                | S                 | Ethenediol                | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Ammonium chloride           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Ethanol                   | 40%           | S                | L                 |
| Ammonium fluoride           | sol.          | S                | S                 | Ethyl acetate             | 100%          | S                | U                 |
| Ammonium nitrate sat. sol.  | S             | S                |                   | Ethylene trichloride      | 100%          | U                | U                 |
| Ammonium sulfate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | F                         |               |                  |                   |
| Ammonium sulfide            | sol.          | S                | S                 | Ferric chloride           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Amyl acetate                | 100%          | S                | L                 | Ferric nitrate            | sol.          | S                | S                 |
| Amyl alcohol                | 100%          | S                | L                 | Ferric sulfate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| B                           |               |                  |                   | Ferrous chloride          | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Barium carbonate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Ferrous sulfate           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Barium chloride             | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Fluorine, gaseous         | 100%          | U                | U                 |
| Barium hydroxide            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Fluorosilicic acid        | 40%           | S                | S                 |
| Barium sulfate              | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Formaldehyde              | 40%           | S                | S                 |
| Barium sulfide              | sol.          | S                | S                 | Formic acid               | 50%           | S                | S                 |
| Benzaldehyde                | 100%          | S                | L                 | Formic acid               | 98-100%       | S                | S                 |
| Benzene                     | —             | L                | L                 | Furfuryl alcohol          | 100%          | S                | L                 |
| Benzoic acid                | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | G                         |               |                  |                   |
| Beer                        | —             | S                | S                 | Gasoline                  | —             | S                | L                 |
| Borax (sodium tetraborate)  | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Glacial acetic acid       | 96%           | S                | L                 |
| Boric acid                  | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Glucose                   | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Bromine, gaseous dry        | 100%          | U                | U                 | Glycerine                 | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Bromine, liquid             | 100%          | U                | U                 | Glycol                    | sol           | S                | S                 |
| Butane, gaseous             | 100%          | S                | S                 | H                         |               |                  |                   |
| 1-Butanol                   | 100%          | S                | S                 | Heptane                   | 100%          | S                | U                 |
| Butyric acid                | 100%          | S                | L                 | Hydrobromic acid          | 50%           | S                | S                 |
| C                           |               |                  |                   | Hydrobromic acid          | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Calcium carbonate           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Hydrochloric acid         | 10%           | S                | S                 |
| Calcium chlorate            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Hydrochloric acid         | 35%           | S                | S                 |
| Calcium chloride            | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Hydrocyanic acid          | 10%           | S                | S                 |
| Calcium nitrate             | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Hydrofluoric acid         | 4%            | S                | S                 |
| Calcium sulfate             | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Hydrofluoric acid         | 60%           | S                | L                 |
| Calcium sulfide             | dil. sol.     | L                | L                 | Hydrogen                  | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Carbon dioxide, gaseous dry | 100%          | S                | S                 | Hydrogen peroxide         | 30%           | S                | L                 |
| Carbon disulfide            | 100%          | L                | U                 | Hydrogen peroxide         | 90%           | S                | U                 |
| Carbon monoxide             | 100%          | S                | S                 | Hydrogen sulfide, gaseous | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Chloroacetic acid           | sol.          | S                | S                 | Lactic acid               | 100%          | S                | S                 |
| Carbon tetrachloride        | 100%          | L                | U                 | Lead acetate              | sat. sol.     | S                | —                 |
| Chlorine, aqueous solution  | sat. sol.     | L                | U                 | Magnesium carbonate       | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Chlorine, gaseous dry       | 100%          | L                | U                 | Magnesium chloride        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Chloroform                  | 100%          | U                | U                 | Magnesium hydroxide       | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Chromic acid                | 20%           | S                | L                 | Magnesium nitrate         | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Chromic acid                | 50%           | S                | L                 | Maleic acid               | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
| Citric acid                 | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Mercuric chloride         | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
|                             |               |                  |                   | Mercuric cyanide          | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |
|                             |               |                  |                   | Mercuric nitrate          | sol.          | S                | S                 |

| Medium                   | Concentration | Resistance at:   |                   | Medium   | Concentration       | Resistance at:   |                   |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                          |               | 20° C<br>(68° F) | 60° C<br>(140° F) |  |                     | 20° C<br>(68° F) | 60° C<br>(140° F) |
| Mercury                  | 100%          | S                | S                 | Silver acetate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Methanol                 | 100%          | S                | S                 | Silver cyanide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Methylene chloride       | 100%          | L                | —                 | Silver nitrate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Milk                     | —             | S                | S                 | Sodium benzoate  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Molasses                 | —             | S                | S                 | Sodium bicarbonate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| N                        |               |                  |                   | Sodium biphosphate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nickel chloride          | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Sodium bisulfite   | sol.                | S                | S                 |
| Nickel nitrate           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Sodium bromide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nickel sulfate           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Sodium carbonate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nicotinic acid           | dil. sol.     | S                | —                 | Sodium chlorate  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nitric acid              | 25%           | S                | S                 | Sodium chloride  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nitric acid              | 50%           | S                | U                 | Sodium cyanide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nitric acid              | 75%           | U                | U                 | Sodium ferricyanide  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Nitric acid              | 100%          | U                | U                 | Sodium ferrocyanide  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| O                        |               |                  |                   | Sodium fluoride  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Oils and Grease          | —             | S                | L                 | Sodium hydroxide   | 40%                 | S                | S                 |
| Oleic acid               | 100%          | S                | L                 | Sodium hydroxide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Orthophosphoric acid     | 50%           | S                | S                 | Sodium hypochlorite  | 15% active chlorine | S                | S                 |
| Orthophosphoric acid     | 95%           | S                | L                 | Sodium nitrate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Oxalic acid              | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Sodium nitrite   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Oxygen                   | 100%          | S                | L                 | Sodium orthophosphate  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Ozone                    | 100%          | L                | U                 | Sodium sulfate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| P                        |               |                  |                   | Sodium sulfide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Petroleum (kerosene)     | —             | S                | L                 | Sulfur dioxide, dry  | 100%                | S                | S                 |
| Phenol                   | sol.          | S                | S                 | Sulfur trioxide  | 100%                | U                | U                 |
| Phosphorus trichloride   | 100%          | S                | L                 | Sulfuric acid  | 10%                 | S                | S                 |
| Photographic developer   | cust. conc.   | S                | S                 | Sulfuric acid  | 50%                 | S                | S                 |
| Picric acid              | sat. sol.     | S                | —                 | Sulfuric acid  | 98%                 | S                | U                 |
| Potassium bicarbonate    | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Sulfuric acid  | fuming              | U                | U                 |
| Potassium bisulfide      | sol.          | S                | S                 | Sulfurous acid   | 30%                 | S                | S                 |
| Potassium bromate        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | T  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium bromide        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Tannic acid  | sol.                | S                | S                 |
| Potassium carbonate      | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Tartaric acid  | sol.                | S                | S                 |
| Potassium chlorate       | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Thionyl chloride   | 100%                | L                | U                 |
| Potassium chloride       | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Toluene  | 100%                | L                | U                 |
| Potassium chromate       | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Triethylamine  | sol.                | S                | L                 |
| Potassium cyanide        | sol.          | S                | S                 | U  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium dichromate     | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Urea   | sol.                | S                | S                 |
| Potassium ferricyanide   | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Urine  | —                   | S                | S                 |
| Potassium ferrocyanide   | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | W  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium fluorid        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Water  | —                   | S                | S                 |
| Potassium hydroxide      | 10%           | S                | S                 | Wine vinegar   | —                   | S                | S                 |
| Potassium hydroxide      | sol.          | S                | S                 | Wines and liquors  | —                   | S                | S                 |
| Potassium hypochlorite   | sol.          | S                | L                 | X  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium nitrate        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Xylenes  | 100%                | L                | U                 |
| Potassium orthophosphate | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Y  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium perchlorate    | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Yeast  | sol.                | S                | S                 |
| Potassium permanganate   | 20%           | S                | S                 | Z  |                     |                  |                   |
| Potassium persulfate     | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Zinc chloride  | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Potassium sulfate        | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 | Zinc (II) chloride   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Potassium sulfite        | sol.          | S                | S                 | Zinc (IV) chloride   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Propionic acid           | 50%           | S                | S                 | Zinc oxide   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Propionic acid           | 100%          | S                | L                 | Zinc sulfate   | sat. sol.           | S                | S                 |
| Pyridine                 | 100%          | S                | L                 |  |                     |                  |                   |
| Q                        |               |                  |                   | Specific immersion testing should be undertaken to ascertain the suitability of chemicals not listed above with reference to special requirements. |                     |                  |                   |
| Quinol (Hydroquinone)    | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |  |                     |                  |                   |
| S                        |               |                  |                   |  |                     |                  |                   |
| Salicylic acid           | sat. sol.     | S                | S                 |  |                     |                  |                   |

## Notes:

(S) Satisfactory: Liner material is resistant to the given reagent at the given concentration and temperature. No mechanical or chemical degradation is observed.

(L) Limited Application Possible: Liner material may reflect some attack. Factors such as concentration, pressure and temperature directly affect liner performance against the given media. Application, however, is possible under less severe conditions, e.g. lower concentration, secondary containment, additional liner protections, etc.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Liner material is not resistant to the given reagent at the given concentration and temperature. Mechanical and/or chemical degradation is observed.

(-) Not tested

sat. sol. = Saturated aqueous solution, prepared at 20°C (68°F)

sol. = aqueous solution with concentration above 10% but below saturation level

dil. sol. = diluted aqueous solution with concentration below 10%

cust. conc. = customary service concentration

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## Chemical Resistance for Geomembrane Products

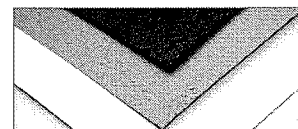
GSE geomembranes are made of high quality, virgin polyethylene which demonstrates excellent chemical resistance. GSE polyethylene geomembranes are resistant to a great number and combinations of chemicals. It is this property of (HDPE) high density polyethylene geomembranes that makes it the lining material of choice.

In order to gauge the durability of a material in contact with a chemical mixture, testing per ASTM D5747 is required in which the material is exposed to the chemical environment in question. Chemical resistance testing is a very large and complex topic because of two factors. First, the number of specific media is virtually endless and second, there are many criteria such as tensile strength, hardness, etc. that may be used to assess a material's resistance to degradation.

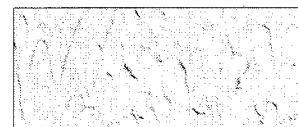
The chemical resistance of polyethylene has been investigated by many people over the past few decades. We are able to draw from that work when making statements about the chemical resistance of today's polyethylene geomembranes. In addition to that, many tests have been performed that specifically use geomembranes and certain chemical mixtures. Naturally, however, every mixture of chemicals cannot be tested for. As a result of these factors, GSE published a chemical resistance chart, demonstrating general guidelines.

Polyethylene is, for practical purposes, considered impermeable. Be aware, however, that all materials are permeable to some extent. Permeability varies with concentration, temperature, pressure and type of permeant. The rates of permeation are usually so low, however, that they are insignificant. As a point of reference, polyethylene is commonly used for packaging of several types of materials. These include gasoline, motor oil, household cleaners (i.e. bleach), muratic acid, pesticides, insecticides, fungicides, and other highly concentrated chemicals. Also, you should be aware that there are some chemicals which may be absorbed by the material but only when present at very high concentrations. These include halogenated and/or aromatic hydrocarbons at greater than 50%; their absorption results in swelling and slight changes in physical properties such as increased tensile elongations. This includes many types of fuels and oils. Recognize that this action, however, does not affect the liner's ability to act as a barrier for the material it is containing.

Since polyethylene is a petroleum product, it can absorb other petroleum products. Like a sponge, the material becomes slightly thicker and more flexible but does not produce a hole or void. However, unlike a sponge, this absorption is not immediate. It takes a much longer time for a polyethylene liner to swell than it does for a sponge. The exact time it takes for swelling to occur depends on the particular constituents and concentrations of the contained media. However, a hole would not be produced. Also, this absorption is reversible and the material will essentially return to it's original state when the chemical is no longer in contact with the liner.



**GSE Geomembranes**



**GSE Textured HPDE**

### GSE GEOMEMBRANES

An HDPE geomembrane used in applications that require excellent chemical resistance and endurance properties



## **RESPONSE TO COMMENT 52**

***ADEQ COMMENT:** Presence of hydrocarbons in the groundwater has been documented in the application. Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 49-243(B)(3) states that “no pollutants discharged will further degrade at the applicable point of compliance the quality of any aquifer that at time of issuance of the permit violates the aquifer quality standard for that pollutant.” Please provide an evaluation that capture and reinjection of hydrocarbon pollutants through the In-Situ process in other parts of the aquifer does not violate requirements of other programs such as the leaking underground storage tank (LUST) program or other applicable ADEQ programs.*

### **RESPONSE:**

Based on our model of the occurrences of hydrocarbons at the site (as discussed under the response to comment 3, there are two sources:

1. Drilling fluids, including diesel or some other petroleum product in CS-10 and CS-14. LNAPL, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are present in these coreholes. The extent of hydrocarbons associated with source #1 is in the immediate area of the two boreholes, for the reasons outlined in the response to comment 3.
2. Gasoline compounds (primarily benzene, toluene, and 1,2 dichloroethane—a lead scavenger) from leaking underground storage tanks at the “Thing” (ADEQ LUST ID 4387). ADEQ closed the site in May 2005.

To the extent that hydrocarbon pollutants are present in the aquifer, they may be captured through the in-situ process. However, this will not violate requirements of other ADEQ programs. If petroleum from either of these sources is recovered with PLS, it would be captured through the SX-EW process, as described in the response to comment 3c. These hydrocarbons will not be reinjected. Although the SX-EW process is not intended as a remediation measure, it would serve as an effective way of removing any petroleum compounds from raffinate before it is re-injected into the aquifer.